THREE SECRETS

I couldn't have made this second one-shot if it weren't for the support of my editor, the editorial department of Bessatsu Margaret magazine, my assistants and all the people who helped in its realisation. And I have to thank all my readers of course. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

November 2010
Ayuko

On Valentine's Day
I'm going to confess to Taisuke!
Chiho, Maiko! That's why
Alright, I'm going for it!
You what?
I'll be counting on your chocolate making skills!
Come oooon!!
I'll help you.
Thank you, Maiko!
You know how much I fail at cooking!
You're nasty before, right Chiho...?
OUR FIRST YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL AND WE'RE TOTALLY INSEPARABLE.
MAIKO KUDO -KAWA
CHIHO UME -HARA
AKANE INOUE

THE START OF FEBRUARY.
IT'LL SOON BE VALENTINE'S DAY!
Eeh?
You're going that way today, Maiko?
Yes
I have to pass by my mom's work
See you tomorrow then
Oh, okay!
Taisuke...
Ah it's you Kubo-kawa
Do you live around here?
No
I have some-where to go
So that's why your friends aren't with you
Yeah
Are you girls getting along?
Ah, yes!

TL/N: Wh[illegible]!! >_<

Nothing's gonna stop us three!!
Alright!
Let's go through it again, our action plan for the 13th next week!
Chocolate idea
Something pretty
Chocolate sponge cake
Delicious!
After class, we'll get together at my place!
Chiho you're in charge of the wrapping you've got great taste in those things
And Mako, you like cooking, right? Then I'll leave the preparation to you!
So what will you be doing then Akane?
I'll get all the ingre-dients!
IS SHE FOR REAL NOW?
Well...
You know...
It's always better to give homemade chocolates to the one you're in love with.
AND OTHERS HAVE TO DO ALL THE WORK.
Hmph
chocolate with hairs
Not at all!
I'm sure he'll freak out if he gets something like that
If I put my heart in it I'll definitely have a better chance to win over Taisuke
Hon-estly Chiho...
You're not really into it are you?
It doesn't surprise me you have so much trouble finding a guy to like.

LATELY...
AKANE HAS BEEN REALLY GETTING ON MY NERVES.
SINCE I ENTERED HIGH SCHOOL THIS YEAR I'VE BEEN HANGING OUT WITH AKANE AND MAIKO.
BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
IT'S REALLY JUST BECAUSE WE SAT NEXT TO EACH OTHER ON THE FIRST DAY.
EVEN IF I SAY THEY'RE MY FRIENDS
OUR RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE TO THE ONE WITH MIDORI AND IT'S BECOMING MORE AND MORE APPARENT
BOOK
Midori!

Chiho!
Uwaah! What a surprise!
What are you reading?
Ah, a revision book
And you, Chiho? Are you going to your private lessons?
Yes
You know...
You know you can just call me whenever you want
I wonder if I could go to the same place as you.
It's a shame we aren't in the same class anymore, we don't get to see each other often
You said you didn't really like texting a lot so...
Ah... but...
I went to see that movie you told me about. It was really moving.
Really? I'm so glad.
Hey Midori...
Let's go back to how we were before the two of us
I was worried you might not like it.
Midori...
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED ONE BIT SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL.
Right, let me introduce you two...
Midori...
Ah!
This is Remi, we're both in class!

Remi
This is Chiho, from class 5
Eeh?!
No way!!
I'm Remi! Nice to meet you!!
So you're Chiho!
Same here.
But you're even cuter than I had imagined...
You look so pretty with twintails!
Midorin told me a lot about you!
And you're really good at school stuff too, right? You should teach me some times, 'kay!
What did you buy?
Let's see...
The Mine-mins...
and a fan book of Ta'sho Jump
Is that a boy band?
THIS GIRL IS KIND OF LIKE AKANE.
Hey.
I have to go to my lesson now
Ah...
Good luck then...
Chiho!
We'll stay in touch, 'kay?

You were spacing out there, weren't you?
Huh?!
Uh... Yes, I did!
So, tell me.
How was he in middle school?
Was he surrounded by girls?
Hey Maiko
You went to the same middle school as Taisuke, right?
Yes
That doesn't surprise me...
He was likeable
Imagining
To be honest...
I was actually kind of afraid of him.
At first, he seems a bit cold...
Or rather... He was just very honest with everyone
And you? You must have liked him as well, no?
Really?!
Well, that makes things easier for me!
Thanks for always having my back, Maiko!
.....

Akane...
A
I...
!
Taisuke!
You've been there the whole time?
Yeah, I got remin-minded by some-one.
Isn't Umehara with you guys?
She went to her private lesson.
Ah, is that the assignment you guys got by drawing lots the other day?
Yup.
that's the one
She did? Inoue, could you give her this message for me?
Huh? What?
It's for the prepa-ration committee for the gradua-tion cere-mony
We have a meeting next Tuesday.
Alright!
I'll tell her for sure!!
Uhm...
I'm kind of an airhead some-times, but...
When people ask me to do something, I always do it with a great sense of responsibility.
It's sooo a little exaggerated, you know...
I know.

That's why I asked you, Inoue
click
The sunset is beautiful today
It is
I took a picture of it As proof of Taisuke's trust in me
I noticed that
He's rather cold towards other girls
But as for me, he quite often just chats with me
And the other day...
He told me "The atmosphere is more fun when you're around."
That's what he said!
Nozomi!?

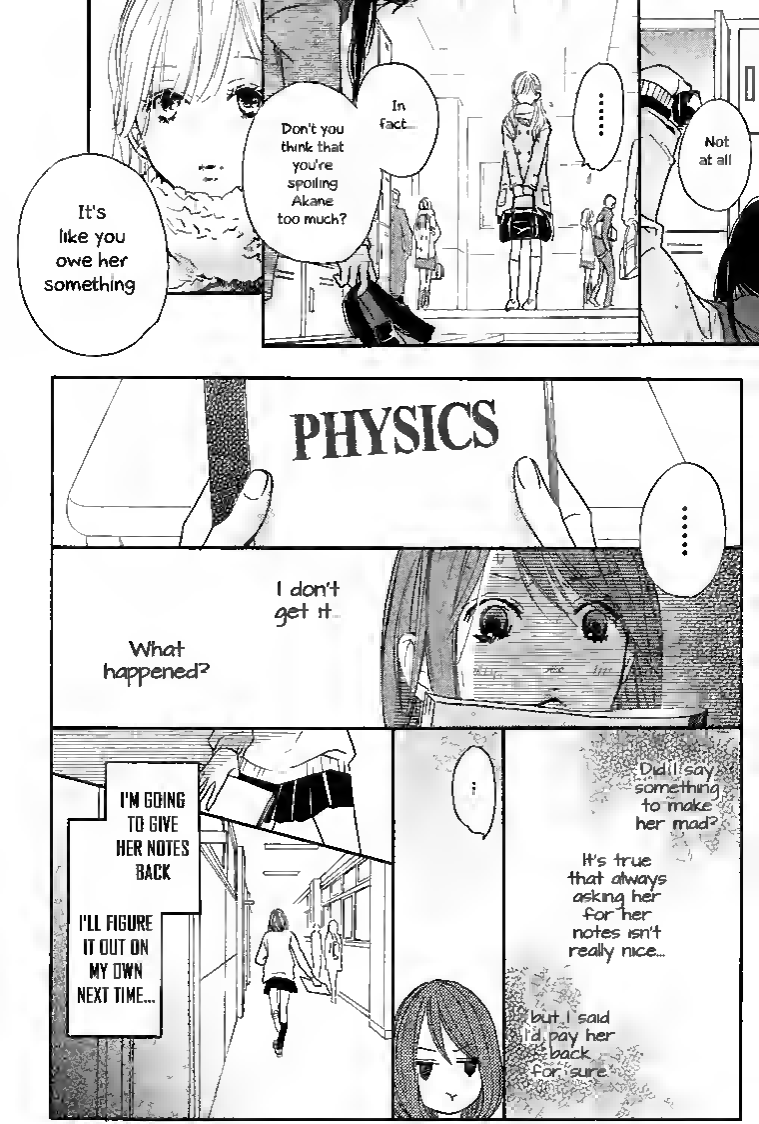
You're always...
taking pictures with that camera
Ah, yeah!
My cousin gave it to me
He's a real geek!
You're going to print them?
they don't look so good when you print them out.
Photos taken with a phone aren't that bad, but...
You know
So that made me happy
People don't often compliment me and they don't count on me to do stuff either...
What should I do?
Come on! Let me take one with you!
That sounds kinda cool. Don't it?
That way my memories will feel more real
I think I'll keep on taking pictures
But...
And I don't have a PC either
It's way too expensive!
Nope not at all
click
What should I do?

First of all...
these things are so idiotic, Valentine's Day and all
This whole year Akane dragged me to all kinds of events and stuff
Totally useless things
It's like everything is a good excuse to party
To: Midori
Do you want to go see a movie next Sunday like we used to? They're showing some of Fellini's works at the cinema at 1pm
THAT'S RIGHT
High school is just another two more years
Instead of forcing myself to be with some friends
wouldn't it be better to spend as much time as possible with Midori?
From Midori
Sorry! ;(
I'm stuck at home that day my cousins are coming over
Really, really sorry! (
I promise we'll go another time!
GASP!
I mustered up all my courage for this...

Things were better in middle school.
COME ALL ALONE
Midori and I we often went to this cinema last year
And after the movie...
we'd talk about it for hours on end while having a cup of tea
We really liked the same things

TS/Mr. Mikami's ready to help me...
You said you weren't into that stuff
Why are you buying chocolates?
Why?
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY
WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME?
I promise to try harder next time
I'm really sorry for asking you each time
I completely forgot that physics assignment was due today
Why are ou here with that girl?
Pretty please!

Akane.
Huh?
Do you want me to give you my book?
But
You're not that good at science, right?
PHYSICS
CLASS 1-5
CHIHO UMEHARA
FLAP
!!
Great, you're the best!
As a thanks, I'll buy you your favorite cake next time we-
Maiko
You coming?
But...
Chiho
.....
You seem irritated today?


It's like you owe her something
Don't you think that you're spoiling Akane too much?
In fact...
.....
Not at all
PHYSICS
.....
I don't get it...
What happened?
I'M GOING TO GIVE HER NOTES BACK
I'LL FIGURE IT OUT ON MY OWN NEXT TIME...
;
Did I say something to make her mad?
It's true that always asking her for her notes isn't really nice...
but I said I'd pay her back for sure.

THERE THEY ARE!
N...
No, it's not like that...
AH!
She's always so incon -siderate when talking to you
Doesn't that bother you at all?!
Like I would want to eat cake with her!
And it's not just today. She's like that all the time!
If you didn't play along all the time Akane wouldn't be acting like a spoiled child!

I see...
.....
So that's how they think of me...
The two of them...

Preparation committee for the graduation ceremony
Project report

tac
blaah
Class 5, please sit over there!
tac
All right...
.....
CAN'T WAIT TILL IT'S OVER...
WHAT A JOKE
NO NEED FOR A WHOLE CEREMONY. JUST PUT SOME CHAIRS THERE AND IT'D BE FINE
Ume-hara...
I'll leave taking notes to you.
Hey, hey!
Chiho...
Can't wait till it's over...

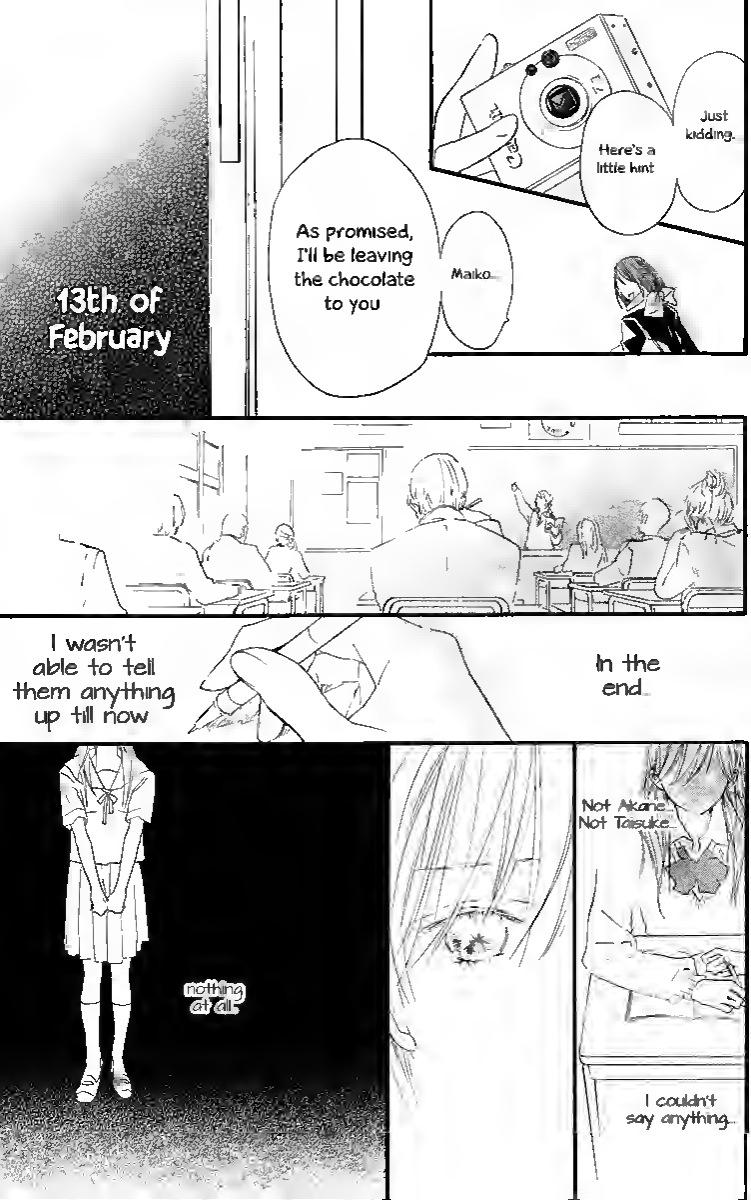
What are we gonna do, Chiho?
We're not in the same class anymore.
Oh no...
I won't ever be able to find a friend like you!
That girl with glasses just now
Do you know her?
Yeah
We went to the same middle school, always been together
Her dad is a scholar
And she got the best scores on our previous exam
You've never heard of her before?
I see.
ANYWAY...
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S MY FRIEND ANYMORE
Then
You also know the girl who was with her?

She's kind of like Inoue, isn't she?
Not really
No
Ah, that so?
It's my first time seeing her.
Her hand was always in the air
Even though she didn't really have anything interesting to say.
But everyone was swept up in her pace
You're right.
She was the only one to talk loudly

She was bubbly, positive
And full of herself!
.....
So what...?
You like Akane, is that what you want to say?
At the very least...
I like her more than you do.
What's with that...?
You're just like Maiko
Why do you all feel the need to defend her?

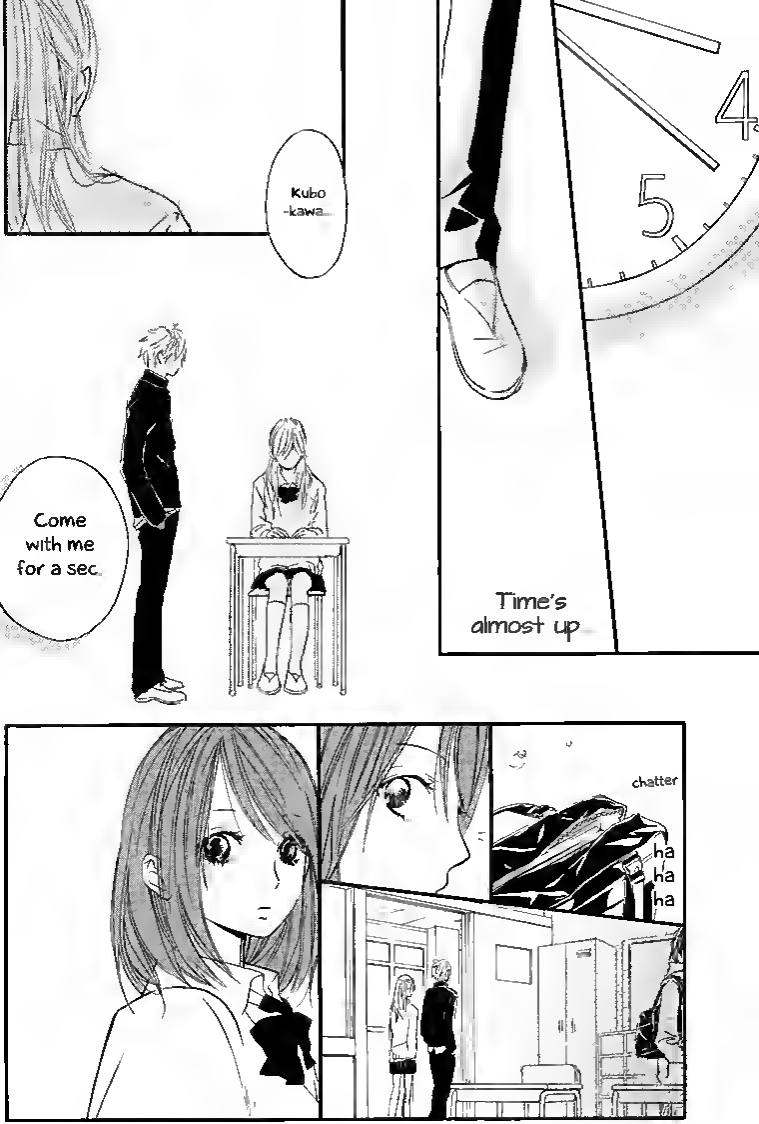
Why?
It's true that she's...
a bit selfish and even annoying at times.
Why do I always have to lose?
You just can't see all her bad points.
But at least she...
doesn't leave any of her friends behind.
In my opinion, if Kubokawa likes to be with her...
it's because she can acknowledge Akane's kindness
Kuko-kawa
have her share of troubles in the past.
.....
Besides...

Shut up!
I'm sure Inoue... is grateful towards you, in her own way
Maiko...
I'll be going this way today
Huh?
what kind of thing?
.....
It's a SECRET.
I have something to take care of...


13th of February
As promised, I'll be leaving the chocolate to you
Maiko...
Here's a little hint
Just kidding.
I wasn't able to tell them anything up till now
In the end...
nothing at all...
Not Akane... Not Taisuke...
I couldn't say anything...

I remained silent...
Say something!
What happened?

So, for question three.
Kubo -kawa
.....
Kubo -kawa?
.....
I don't know...


Kubo-kawa...
Time's almost up...
Come with me for a sec.
chatter
ha ha ha

Le
Let me think about it
To give me your answer
I'd like you
I don't know yet.
I HAVE TO TELL HIM.
I
I HAVE TO TELL HIM...
.....

Uhm
When I think about
about Akane's feelings
What don't you know?
What does she have to do with this?
Well...
I won't be waiting for a yes or anything, but however you put it...
If that's the reason you can't accept it...
why did you just tell me you don't know yet?
I think it's a shame

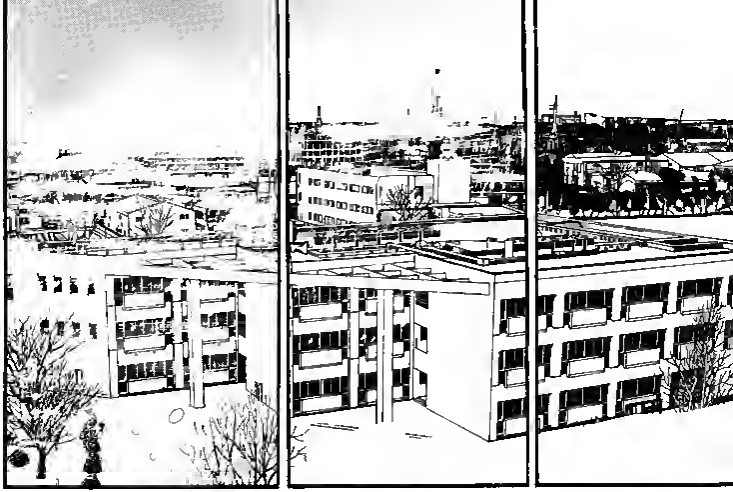
Kubo -kawa...
You haven't changed at all since middle school
1-5
Akane!
Let's go...
We're making chocolate today, right?
A promise is a promise. I'm totally at your serv-
Sorry!
I'll be right back!

Taisuke!
!
Ah!
Could it be that
You were talking to Maiko, up there?
yes ...
I see
It's weird...
But I thought she was looking sad today
Is she having troubles?
Or worries?
Did she tell you something?
Yes.
It seems she's been stressed about something for a while.

1-5
She's taking her sweet time.
Seriously, what are the two of them doing?
Because she was hiding the fact
That I confessed to her

Maiko...
Akane...
Ho ho ho...
What are you doing here, all alone?
Come on, let's go!
You didn't forget, did you?
We're making chocolate today, the three of us.
.....
Yes.

SLAP
Akane?!



I have an umbrella.
We're going home.
Forget the chocolate!
Listen...
Maiko...

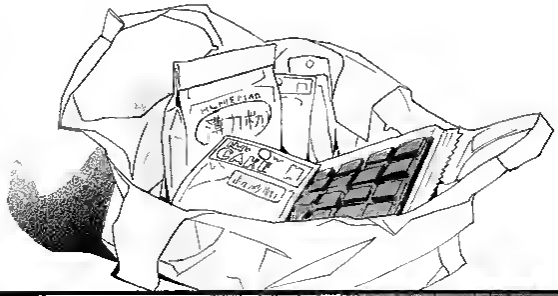
You should stop hanging out with Akane.
TS/It I fee like crying with what she's saying
You don't want to keep serving at her every whim, right?
That's not friendship, is it?
That's not friendship, is it?
The only reason why we're together, is because we were seated next to each other

You want to go to Akane?
What?
Maiko?
Fine, go on then, if that's what you want
...
okay
Just know that
As for me...
I don't plan on seeing her again!
Chiho

I'm sorry!
FORGIVE ME...
CHIHO!
I KNOW YOU'RE ONLY ANGRY BECAUSE YOU CARE FOR ME.
I'M SORRY...
but I...
I've finally understood something.

At the end of middle school
I couldn't go to class anymore
The moment I set foot in the class room, I was paralyzed
I tried starting over again in high school, but to no avail
Every day, I just wanted to sink in the ground and disappear
I thought I'd be stuck like that for forever
You're shaking?
Yeah, it's kinda cold today, isn't it?
Right until

And yet
I've always been running away
Chiho said we became friends just because our seats were next to one another
But I'm really glad we happened to sit next to each other
I met Akane



I forgot.

I asked her to stay out later tonight.

because my friends were coming over.

They didn't even think of me as their friend.
I'm such an idiot!
I always let other people do things in my place
Honestly, I'm useless on my own
made fun of me
They've always hated me
I shouldn't have done...
ding dong...
"that"
They've always

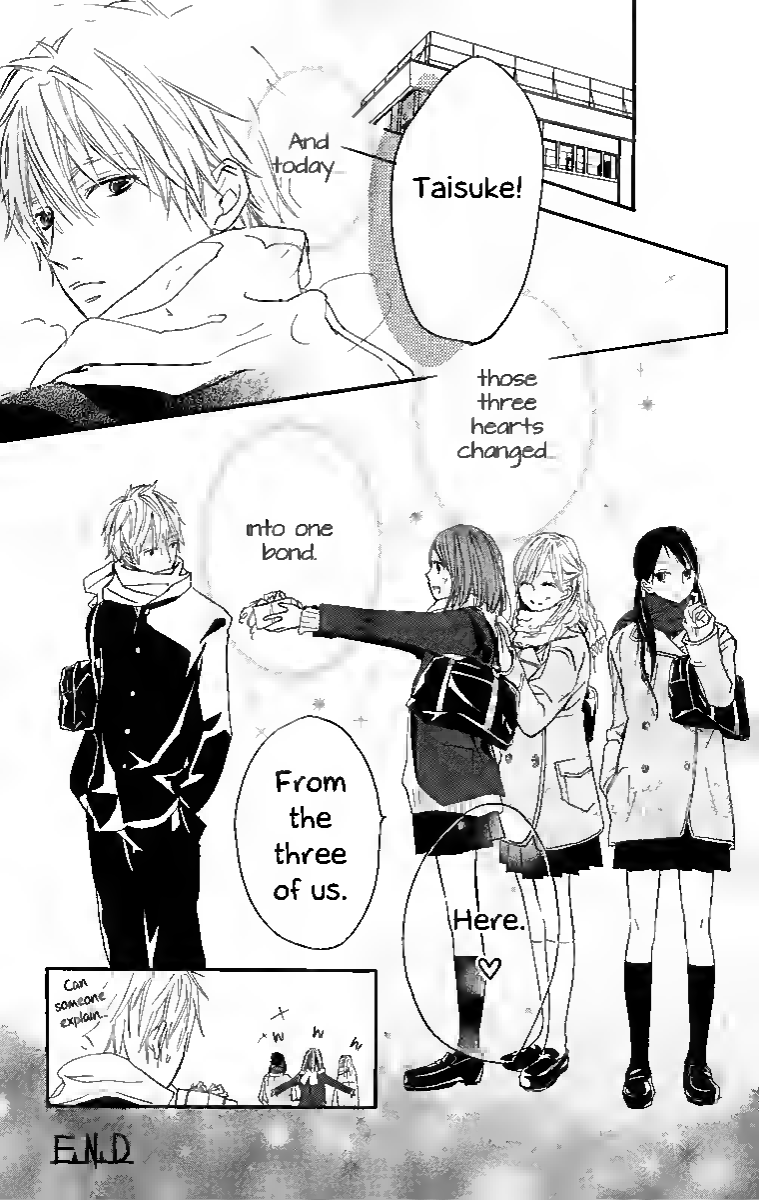
Oh!
Welcome home So early today?
There was something in the mail for you...
Is some-thing wrong?
I put in on the shoe rack
Miss Chiho Umehara
Is it from one of your friends?
It looks like the sender made sure it arrived today

flap
What are you doing, Maiko?!
Here
Take this towel
The house is heated, come on in...
Akane...
I wanted to tell you...
That I'm in love with Taisuke as well

Dear Chino,
So, here I am, writing you a letter
Surprising, isn't it?
All the photos she's taken up till now?
What's this?
I wanted to thank you... for helping me with the chocolate today
(Of course, as I'm writing this letter, it won't be done yet...
but I'm sure it's gonna turn out really well!!)
I want to thank you for putting up with my silly demands...
Lately
I realized just how much I must have been annoying you and Maiko. It gave me a lot to think about.
The photos in this letter are both to thank you and to say sorry
I'll try my best to change my bad habits.
So, when we're second-years or even after we've graduated...
I'd like for us to still be friends, the three of us.

I'm sorry I kept it a secret from you...
But... I just couldn't tell you.
NOT LOSING THOSE WHO ARE PRECIOUS TO YOU...
I like Tai-suke but...
The reason I'm here right now
Is all because of you, Akane!
WANTING TO BE ACCEPTED BY SOMEONE ...
HAVING REAL FRIENDS ...

But when you're sad, Akane, I feel sad as well.
I can't say which one of you means more to me
Does that mean...
Does that mean you're more important to me?
THE THREE SECRETS ...
ARE THESE THREE HEARTS OF OURS.
SNAP
Oh, it's Chihe!


And today...
Taisuke!
those three hearts changed...
into one bond.
From the three of us.
Here. ♡
Can someone explain...
E.N.D

goldenrozescans.wordpress.com
papermoonwosagashite.tumblr.com

a golden roze & papermoon joint

raws: amtl

translator: ailly

clean: straydog12

typeset: _g

qc: nutella